

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**'TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION' COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS
HONOR CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Say the words, “the Civil Rights Movement,” and many iconic images come quickly and readily to mind. Thurgood Marshall arguing before the United States Supreme Court. Martin Luther King’s dream shining off the Reflecting Pool in the capital of a deeply divided nation. Rosa Parks refusing to move to the back of the bus. The Little Rock Nine. The courage of the Freedom Riders.

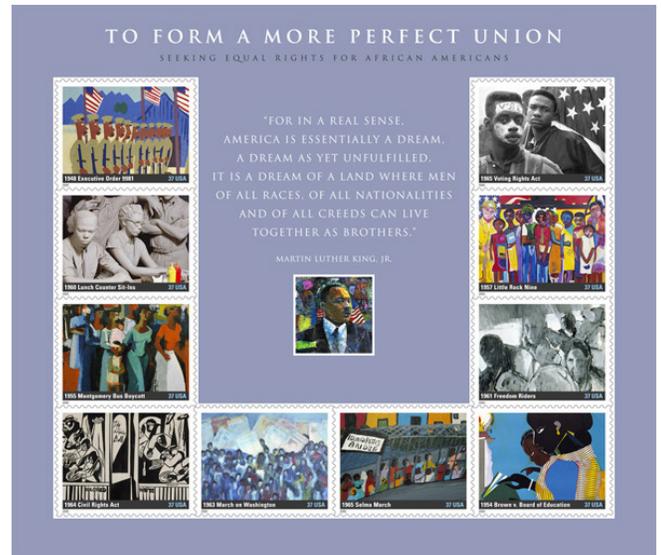
The United States Postal Service today dedicated 10 stamps commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and honored the Civil Rights Movement’s most enduring milestones and the people who made them possible.

Under extraordinary circumstances they sat down to stand up for injustice; walked so we could ride; marched for justice and to end discrimination; went to school despite the hatred awaiting them and voted so their ballots could talk for them.

“The Postal Service is proud to add the “To Form A More Perfect Union” commemorative stamps to our 2005 stamp program, a program that celebrates the people, events and history of our nation,” said John E. Potter, Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer. “These stamps trace the history of our nation’s Civil Rights Movement through vivid illustrations of key events, people and decisions that changed the course of this nation.”

Postal officials, joined by Civil Rights Movement participants, planned to dedicate “To Form a More Perfect Union” commemorative pane in eight cities tied to milestones of the movement: Greensboro, NC; Jackson, MS; Little Rock, AR; Memphis, TN; Montgomery, AL; Selma, AL; Topeka, KS and Washington, DC.

Dorothy Height, Chair and President Emerita of the National Council of Negro Women, Inc., spoke in Washington, D.C., where stamps commemorating Executive Order 9981 (integration in all military branches), the March on Washington and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were dedicated. She marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., sat in sessions with Stokely Carmichael, rode with Rosa Parks and participated in meetings with President John F. Kennedy.



“These stamps herald the struggle of men, women and children in the quest for equality,” said Dr. Height. “They are a fitting reminder that the work yet to be done must be built upon the contributions made by millions to bring our country to a better place.”

Fred Gray spoke at the Montgomery, AL, dedication ceremony. When he was 24, less than a year out of law school, he represented Rosa Parks when she was arrested for refusing to move to the back of the bus and Dr. Martin Luther King on civil rights issues. Gray has kept his promise “to become a lawyer, return to Alabama, and destroy everything segregated I could find.

“As I look over the 10 events these stamps represent,” he explained. “I realize I’ve been involved with nearly all of them in one way or another.”

The story of the Civil Rights struggle was echoed at stamp dedication ceremonies in other cities, including:

- Franklin McCain speaking about his role planning the 1960 “Greensboro Four” lunch counter sit-in.
- “Little Rock Nine” member Melba Pattillo Beals recounting the first days of integration under military escort to Central High School in 1957.
- In Memphis, TN, Rev. Samuel Billy Kyles, who was with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the last hour of his life, sharing his thoughts on the struggle for equality.
- U.S. Rep. John Lewis, (D-GA), recognized as one of the ‘Big Six’ leaders of the Civil Rights movement, describing being nearly beaten to death at the hands of club-welding troopers as he attempted to lead more than 600 marchers across Selma’s Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma.
- Cheryl Brown Henderson, President and CEO of the Brown foundation for Educational, Equity, Excellence and Research, speaking in Topeka about her father’s role as “Brown” in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision that declared separate educational facilities for black and white children to be inherently unequal.

The 10 milestones depicted in the “To Form a More Perfect Union” stamps series are the Selma March, Montgomery Bus Boycott, Greensboro Lunch Counter Sit In, Freedom Riders, Little Rock Nine, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Brown v. Board of Education, Executive Order 9981, March on Washington, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The stamps will be available nationwide at Post Offices and Philatelic Centers Aug. 30.

Since 1775, the Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. An independent federal agency, the Postal Service makes deliveries to more than 142 million addresses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of \$69 billion, it is the world’s leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. Moreover, today’s postage rates will remain stable until at least 2006. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world’s mail volume—some 206 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves seven million customers each day at its 37,000 retail locations nationwide.

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How to Order the First Day of Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to:

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
PO BOX 27420
GREENSBORO NC 27420-9998

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
GMF PHILATELIC CENTER
401 E SOUTH ST
JACKSON MS 39205-5200

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
600 E CAPITOL AVE
LITTLE ROCK AR 72202-9998

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
1 N FRONT ST RM 349
MEMPHIS TN 38103-9998

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
6701 WINTON BLOUNT BLVD
MONTGOMERY AL 36119-9998

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
1301 ALABAMA AVE
SELMA AL 36703-9998

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
424 S KANSAS AVE
TOPEKA KS 66603-9998

TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION STAMPS
POSTMASTER
900 BRENTWOOD RD NE
WASHINGTON DC 20066-9998

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by September 29, 2005.

How to Order First Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

INFORMATION FULFILLMENT
DEPT 6270
US POSTAL SERVICE
PO BOX 219014
KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014